



**Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Office of Highway Safety**

For Immediate Release

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Motorists asked to ‘share the road’ with motorcycles

May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 28, 2010) — The Kentucky Office of Highway (KOHS) today joined other federal, state and local highway safety, law enforcement and motorcycle organizations to proclaim May “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month.”

Motorcycle fatalities nationwide have increased during the past decade. Motorcycle fatalities rose 2.2 percent nationwide in 2008 to 5,290, up from 5,174 in 2007.

Officials hope the added safety emphasis in May helps remind motorists to share the road with motorcycles. Motorcyclists are reminded to make themselves visible to other motorists.

“As the weather improves, more and more motorcyclists are hitting the roads,” said KOHS Executive Director Chuck Geveden. “And with that in mind, pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers of all vehicles, including SUVs, passenger cars or trucks, need to be extra attentive and make sure you ‘share the road.’ A motorcycle is one of the smallest vehicles on our roads, often hidden in a vehicle’s blind spot. Everyone needs to aggressively look for them.”

Motorists and bicyclists should always make visual checks for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections. Pedestrians should also scan for motorcyclists who might be hidden by other traffic.

“Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too,” said KOHS Director of Highway Safety Programs Boyd Sigler. “They should follow the rules of the road, be alert to other drivers, never ride while impaired or distracted, and always wear a Department of Transportation-compliant helmet and other protective gear.”

Sigler said motorcyclists are much more vulnerable in crashes than passenger vehicle occupants. According to research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists are about 37 times more likely to be killed in traffic crashes.

Geveden offered several tips for drivers:

- Allow motorcycles a full lane. Motorcycles have all of the rights and privileges of any motor vehicle on the road.
- Visually check for motorcycles in mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.
- Signal when turning, merging or changing lanes.
- Be cautious of motorcycle turn signals – they can be misleading. Motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed.
- Leave plenty of space when following motorcycles to give them enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.

Motorcyclists should consider these safety tips:

- Avoid riding in poor weather conditions.
- Wear brightly colored protective gear and a DOT-compliant helmet.
- Use reflective tape and stickers to increase visibility.
- Use turn signals for every turn or lane change, even if it appears no one else is around.
- Combine hand signals and turn signals to draw more attention.
- Keep a visible position in the lane of travel.
- Never drive impaired.

“Our message to all drivers and motorcyclists is simple. Share the responsibility and do your part in decreasing fatalities by safely sharing the road,” Sigler said.

For more information visit <http://highwaysafety.ky.gov> and www.nhtsa.dot.gov

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